

September 2023



Letter from the Executive Director

## The Everyday Matters in Mentoring

**"I pray and hope that in another life, beneath a different moon, I will be be the (one) to turn that raft around."** - Fong Lee, in the essay "Sisters on the Other Side of the River" \*

If I'm lucky, I start my days, after I've finished walking around the block with McKee the Scottish Terrier who recently entered my life, with a routine: Step 1: Do Wordle on the back deck; Step 2: Drink a double shot of espresso in a cafe; Step 3: Write the workday's to-do list by hand in my old-fashioned spiral notebook; 4. Read at least one chapter in a book.

I've convinced myself that routine allows me to clear my head and prepare for a productive, well-considered day.

Some days it's hard to tear myself away from the book to focus on the rest of the day.

One of those books in recent months has been [Big Feelings](#), the brilliant work by Liz Fosslien and Molly Duffy West. A nonfiction book about working through life's emotions, with implications for a healthy, happier, and more empathetic life at work and everywhere else, t2pRI co-founder Doug Lennick has been leading illuminating discussions on each chapter.

Knowing that I too tend to read much more nonfiction than fiction, I've been intrigued by [recent studies](#) on the relationship between reading and the development of empathy, a critical component of living an emotionally intelligent life.

Then, by chance, while waiting for my bus on Nicollet Mall a few days ago, I bought the

poetically-rendered nonfiction book of essays that contains Fong Lee's haunting words quoted above. It's a book I've had to tear myself away from each morning in a way that only fiction can. More than seeking validation that nonfiction too can enrich one's emotional intelligence, reading this work shows how nonfiction in the right hands, can be just as powerful. It's a book that contains another essay titled "Certificate of Humanity" that cannot help but move you to take compassionate action.

I believe in the power of the every day act to make change, or at least to make a difference in someone's life. I believe in the snowball effect of hope.

I remember well from growing up in a small town that one of the worst things I could do as a small child was to not say hello to someone on the street. That kind of awareness of the meaning of the everyday stays with you. I'd argue that those every day acts, when our attention is so easily 'stolen,' matters now more than ever in my lifetime.

This month we feature one of our incredible mentorship teams — Future Leader Elijah and Mentor Sarah. This is a story of hope in our collective future. Two people with different life experiences coming together to forge a meaningful mentoring partnership around common interests identified by listening to each other and caring about the Future Leaders Academy's purpose to build leadership skills every day.

They've both made the decision to contribute in critically important ways to creating a different moon in which great leadership is the norm.

They're an inspiring duo. We're excited to introduce you to more mentorship teams in the coming months.

- Brian Hammer, PhD

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[2024-2025 Future Leaders Academy flyer](#)

\* "Sisters on the Other Side of the River," written by Kao Kalia Yang in collaboration with oral storyteller Fong Lee, is published in [Somewhere in the Unknown World](#) (2020).